

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 20209

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SALT
SUBJ: SALT AND GREY AREA SYSTEMS

REF: LONDON 09770; USNATO 06306

BEGIN SUMMARY: WHILE WE LEAVE TO OUR COLLEAGUES AT USNATO THE MERITS OF A NATO BODY TO COORDINATE A WESTERN POSITION IN SALT III, WE BELIEVE THAT GOF WOULD OPPOSE CREATION OF SUCH A BODY OR THE ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTION FOR A NATO ASSESSMENT CENTER. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTTEL POINTS OUT THAT NEITHER FRENCH NOR BRITISH WANT NEGOTIATIONS ON GREY AREA SYSTEMS, WHEREAS THE FRG SEEKS THEM. WE KNOW THAT THE GOF HAS ATTEMPTED IN BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH GERMAN OFFICIALS TO CONVINCE THE LATTER THAT THE CONTINUUM OF WESTERN STRATEGIC, THEATER, AND CONVENTIONAL FORCES RENDERS NEGOTIATIONS ON GREY AREA SYSTEMS UNNECESSARY.
 2. REFTTEL RAISES TWO POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH FRG PREOCCUPATIONS: A NEW NATO BODY TO COORDINATE
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PARIS 20209 241035Z

A WESTERN POSITION IN SALT III ON ISSUES OF PARTICULAR EUROPEAN CONCERN, OR A NATO ASSESSMENT CENTER. WE BELIEVE THE GOF WOULD OBJECT TO CREATION OF EITHER INSTITUTION AND WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE. FRENCH OBJECTIONS WOULD STEM NOT JUST FROM TRADITIONAL GOF RELUCTANCE TOWARDS NATO INSTITUTIONS, BUT ALSO A RELUCTANCE TO GIVE THE FRG A GREATER VOICE ON NUCLEAR SUBJECTS.

THIS WAS THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR FRENCH OPPOSITION TO THE GERMAN PROPOSAL IN LATE 1977 TO ESTABLISH A 4-POWER CONSULTING BODY FOR SALT AND GREY AREA SYSTEMS.

3. ONE OF THE POSSIBLE JUSTIFICATIONS OFFERED FOR A NATO ASSESSMENT CENTER IS THAT "U.S. ASSESSMENTS WOULD TAKE ON ADDED PERSUASIVENESS IF BACKED UP BY THE FINDINGS OF A MORE OR LESS INDEPENDENT NATO SYSTEMS ANALYSIS UNIT." WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THIS WOULD REMOVE THE OBJECTION THAT THE EUROPEANS HAVE TO RELY ON U.S. ASSESSMENTS FOR THE THREAT PRESENTED BY VARIOUS SOVIET SYSTEMS BECAUSE THE NATO UNIT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE DEPENDENT ON U.S. INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE.

4. DESPITE ANTICIPATED FRENCH OBJECTIONS, THE PROBLEM POSED BY EMBASSY LONDON WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE. WE THINK WASHINGTON WOULD WANT TO THINK LONG AND HARD BEFORE VENTURING INTO THE CREATION OF A NATO BODY "TO COORDINATE A WESTERN POSITION IN SALT III." WHILE CONSULTING WITH THE ALLIES HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SALT PROCESS, WE HAVE THUS FAR RESISTED HAVING THE ALLIES DICTATE U.S. POSITIONS IN THIS BILATERAL NEGOTIATION. THIS WOULD BECOME MORE DIFFICULT IF A NEW NATO COORDINATING BODY IS CREATED. IN THE EVENT EUROPEAN DESIRES FOR SOME SORT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 20209 241035Z

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT COALESCE, WE WILL BE FACED WITH THE NEED FOR A U.S. RESPONSE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE U.S. SHOULD BLUNTLY TRY TO BLOCK SUCH A PROPOSAL, BUT RATHER SHOULD TRY TO ABSORB IT INTO A CONSULTING FORMAT WHICH WOULD BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO OUR CONTINUED INFLUENCE AND DIRECTION. HARTMAN

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